

Evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament Elections in Hungary

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ESSAYS

Evaluation of the 2009 European Parliament Elections in Hungary¹

Attila Antal

Abstract: *The 2009 elections for the European Union have been special for several reasons: on the one hand the world has been struggling with an economic crisis; on the other hand the Hungarian government has been in crisis since 2006.² As for the second one, the opposition “converted” the elections to a referendum held on the recent work of the government. The predictions of the public opinion polls proved to be adequate: after sending nine representatives five years ago³, the Socialist Party this year could only get four places. Nevertheless the predictions of the opinion polls proved to be unpunctual, because only one-two places were expected to be taken by the far right party Jobbik. It succeeded in getting even three places though. (Only 31,36 % of the citizens voted, which also ‘deformed’ somewhat the situation.) The biggest opposition party Fidesz (56,36 %) received fourteen mandates, which could have been awaited because of the weakness of the government. The question remains though, how can Fidesz handle the far right voters, because Jobbik doesn’t want to belong to a big right-wing conglomerate.*

The tendencies mentioned above predict the rearrangement of the current Hungarian party system, namely the potential appearance of the far right powers. Although the Socialist party sustained a defeat at the elections and parallel to this the right wing could improve their strength, the elections did not turn to a domestic referendum⁴: Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai was not forced to resign, moreover

¹ I would like to thank to Ágnes Szerencsi, Júlia Laktos for helping.

² In 2006, former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány admitted in a speech held behind closed doors – which later became public – that the socialists won the elections with lies. This started the spiral which led to their fall during which time the air became thin around the social democratic-liberal government. The opposition kept the prime minister constantly under pressure, in 2008 they initiated a referendum against the government reforms. Following the failure of the referendum and the political emptiness, the liberals left the coalition. The socialists have been governing from a minority government since spring 2008. All together, these led to the resignation of Ferenc Gyurcsány in March 2009, whose position was taken over by Gordon Bajnai and a government of experts led by him. The opposition has been constantly calling for early elections. The support of the socialist party in the polls dropped to a historic low which projected/projects the results of the EP elections, moreover the parliamentary elections to be held in 2010 (or earlier)

³ This result was seen as a failure already in 2004, in part, this contributed to the resignation of former Prime Minister, Peter Medgyessy.

⁴ There was no short term consequence of the loss in internal politics. Naturally it had long term consequences concerning the party system.

the minority governing Socialist fraction approved (with the votes of their former coalition partner) the laws most important for handling the crises after the defeat.

Keywords: *European elections, Hungary, political parties, Fidesz, Jobbik, Hungarian party system*

Table 1: The names and abbreviations of Hungarian parties in the study

The Hungarian name of the party	The English name of the party	The political attitude	Status in 2009 ⁵ (participation in the Hungarian legislation)	Abbreviations in the study
Fidesz – Magyar Polgári Szövetség – KDNP (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt) ⁶	Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union – Christian Democratic People’s Party	centre-right party	big party (political group in the Hungarian parliament)	Fidesz-KDNP
Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	Movement for a Better Hungary	extreme right party	it can be a medium party	Jobbik
Lehet Más a Politika – Humanista Párt	Politics Can Be Different – Humanist Party	green party	small party	LMP-HP
Magyar Demokrata Fórum	Hungarian Democratic Forum	conservative party (but it is questionable)	small party (members of the Hungarian parliament, without a fraction)	MDF
MCF Roma Összefogás	MCF Gipsy Alliance	minority party	small party	MCF
Magyar Szocialista Párt	Hungarian Socialist Party	centre left, social democratic party	medium party and governing party (political group in the Hungarian parliament)	MSZP
Magyar Kommunista Munkáspárt	Hungarian Communist Workers’ Party	extreme left party	small party	Munkáspárt
Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége	Alliance of Free Democrats	liberal party	small party, it is disintegrating (political group in the Hungarian parliament)	SZDSZ

⁵ According to the results of the 2009 European Elections.

⁶ In my study I consider the KDNP as the part of the Fidesz.

Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja	Hungarian Truth and Life Party	extreme right party	disintegrated	MIÉP
Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség	Hungarian National Union	party alliance, right character	disintegrated	Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség
Szociáldemokrata Párt	Social Democratic Party	social democratic party	small party, with small importance	Szociáldemokrata Párt

The European programs of the parties⁷

Before introducing the programs⁸ in detail some conclusions should be made. Just like five years ago the attitudes of the parties to the elections and to creating programs was quite different: as for the bigger parties only Fidesz, as for smaller ones Jobbik and LMP-HP had real coherent programs, the other parties introduced only thesis, promises before the European Elections. Handling the common policies of the EU is also different: as a general tendency EU is mentioned in a domestic political context, all of the programs handle European topics, but only the election prospects of the parties Fidesz, LMP-HP and SZDSZ are arranged according to the European professional politics. Differences can be also observed by comparing programs with the European party families: Fidesz, SZDSZ, LMP-HP⁹ to a smaller extent Jobbik followed the policy laid down by the European parties in their programmes; others were mainly focused on the domestic content of their programs for the elections.

Fidesz – Preparing for Reigning

In the centre of the European program of Fidesz (*Yes, Hungary is able to achieve more! – European Elections program for Fidesz*)¹⁰, the biggest opposition party, stood the activity of the governments reigning since 2002. The challenge was quite big, as the citizens of a eurosceptic, disappointed country were to be taken to elect. For this purpose Fidesz drew a thick line between the opportunities given by being part of the EU and the failed government policy. Fidesz has positioned itself as

⁷ In the 2009 Hungarian European Elections 8 parties ran a list, out of these 4 parties received mandates. In the following, we would like to introduce the programs and theses of the parties which started a list. (Fidesz, MSZP, Jobbik, MDF, LMP-HP, SZDSZ, Hungarian Communist Workers' Party, MCF Gipsy Alliance)

⁸ From here on I refer to the parties' collection of ideas concerning their European policies as "programs" without distinction to their form. Where necessary I differentiate between the following expressions: programs, program-booklets, theses and manifests.

⁹ Though LMP's membership in the European Green party family is questionable as another (stronger) platform, the Green Left vindicated the right to join the party family for itself.

¹⁰ Available at http://fidesz.hu/download/program2009_magyar.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

a party able to govern, and tried to send the most possible representatives to the fraction of the European People's Party, because as they mentioned many times, without governmental position this is the way to look after their values and carry out their interests. Therefore it can be stated that this program is more than a program for the European elections: this is the European program for a party preparing for the next domestic elections. This statement is reinforced by the party itself as saying that the number and rate of the received votes is going to influence, whether the Hungarian interests are represented on a governmental level. The European elections were thus a 'pre-contest' for Fidesz, which gives the opportunity to act as the representatives of the Hungarian interests, the extension of which can be the triumph on the domestic elections. The elements of the professional politics – except of a few Hungarian cruises – were based on the program of the European People's Party (*Strong for the People*¹¹). Values determining a strong Europe stood in the centre of the program of Fidesz with real problems of the European citizens. Fidesz wants a more effective European democracy, cooperation in the most important fields, like energy- and climate policy, food security, research and development, demography, immigration. The party outlines the importance of united action in the fields of foreign-, defence and security politics, and of the value based enlargement. Though these fields are in accordance with the EPP's program, some differences can be found. Outlined Hungarian topics in the program are: representing the freedom rights of the citizens, the minority rights, supporting the autonomy targets (because of the Hungarians living outside the borders, can be realized with the Lisbon Treaty), integration of the Roma population (the program refers to the pre-works of the European Roma Strategy), and facing the heritage of the totalitarian communist dictatorship of the 20.th century. Fidesz is interested in an active Europe-politics, which is based on the recognition that the decisions of the European institutes are not dictates, and Hungary takes part in the decision-making. Fidesz wants Hungarian interests appear as European in the EPP. The program states that the party's task is the representation of the Hungarian people inside and outside of our borders along the fundamental values and principles of the EPP, when the representation of the Hungarian interests is always regarded as a priority. This means that the party accepts the policy-forming role and ability of the European Union, but wants to enhance the national side of the decision making as well. Though the program and the professional political line of the Fidesz follow those of the EPP, it often does not handle topics of professional politics in a frame of professional politics (e. g. the European institution system).

¹¹ Adopted by the EPP Congress, Warsaw, 29–30 April 2009. Source: http://www.epp.eu/dbimages/pdf/EN-ELECTION-DOC-FINAL_copy_2.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

Table 2: The main policy and European politics elements of the Fidesz's European programm

The main policy and European politics elements of the Fidesz's European programme	
Population and Family Policy; Social and Health Policy; European Roma Policy; Education, Culture, Media and Youth Policy; Employment Policy; Transport Policy; Tax Policy;	Energy Policy; Science, Research, Development and Innovation Policy; Environment and Climate Policy; Agriculture and Rural Development Policy; Common Foreign and Security Policy; External Economic Policy; Enlargement Policy;

SZDSZ – Liberal Thesis

The program of SZDSZ (*What Hungarian liberals do for you in the European Parliament in the next five years?*¹²) summarize principal thesis in 14 points. These thesis refer to the 15-point proclamation¹³ accepted in Stockholm on the 31. October 2008. of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR). Both documents can be regarded as a manifesto rather than a comprehensive program. The above mentioned Fidesz created an election program, ELDR and SZDSZ summarized short leading principles. As for the content, the manifesto of SZDSZ concentrates almost only on the common topics of the EP, so on freedom and opportunity, tolerance, competitiveness, security, sustainable development, stability, transparency, effectiveness, but the program lacks on domestic references. The party does not seem to try to bind the European elections with the Hungarian political mass, though it didn't held it in its campaign: the thesis and the campaign of SZDSZ were not in accordance. The manifesto of the party – like that of the ELDR – begins with the declaration of the values of liberty. Interesting difference is that European liberals again outline the traditional freedom rights (media, thoughts, mass, religion), these keep back in the program of SZDSZ and instead of them outrage the question of freedom of employees, ensuring of the freedom of services, and – what ELDR apostrophes as the fifth freedom – the freedom of knowledge. As stated by mother-party, SZDSZ only declares its targets in questions of European politics, it reinforces its interest in funding the European minority policy, the integration of roma communities, the comprehensive reform of the common agricultural policy, forming of the common European energy policy, fighting against climate change, creating a more transparent and understandable common policy. SZDSZ proposes that European Union has a seat only in Brussels instead of the present three.

¹² Source: <http://www.szent-ivanyi.hu/reflektor.php?id=319> (15. 7. 2009).

¹³ Source: <http://www.eldr.org/pdf/manifeste/eldr-manifeste-electoral-en.pdf> (25. 10. 2009).

Table 3: The policy proposals of the SZDS

The policy proposals of the SZDSZ (by topics)	
Freedom and opportunity Free movement of services The cohesion and regional development funds availability after 2013 (Closing up);	Security, sustainable development, stability To fulfil the requirements of the introduction of the euro; The construction of the Nabucco gas pipeline; Combating climate change; EU enlargement (Croatia, Serbia);
Diversity, tolerance Common European Minority Policy;	
Competitiveness Reloading of the Lisbon Process; Student, teacher and research scholarships, exchange programs; The comprehensive reform of the Common Agricultural Policy; The liberalization of the railway passenger transport and the postal services;	More transparent, more efficient, more democratic European Union A more transparent and clear EU legislation; The rationalization of EP session;

MSZP – European Targets in a Hungarian Form

The 15-point “pledge” of MSZP¹⁴ contains requirements for the European delegation. Therefore it is not a classical program; this is the structural assignment of the socialist promises. Although the document begins with the phrase “*In Europe for the Hungarian interests, in Hungary for the European values*”, the pledges don’t tackle the representation of the European values within the borders, the party only enumerates, along which targets is recommended the representation of Hungary in the EU. The document tries to bind the interests of the individuals with the European Elections, because among the pledges each citizen can find ones respected by them. The pledges can be divided along three fundamental organizing principles: 1. pure Hungarian interests 2. general European interests and values 3. EU, as a political actor.

¹⁴ Source: http://mszp.hu/public/downloads/pdf/mszpvallalasok_a_kovetkezo_ciklusra.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

Table 4: The proposals of the MSZP's European programme

The proposals of the MSZP's European programme		
Pure Hungarian interests	General Europeans interests and values	The EU, as a political actor
Declaring the representation of the Hungarian national interests; To preserve the workplaces, Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises; Against the crisis with Europe; Appropriate EU funds after 2013; The Hungarian countryside and farmers' interests; Successful Hungarian presidency;	Social Europe; The protection of consumers; Viable natural environment; Europe of the young people;	A strong and effective Europe; People close to the EU;
European energy security (the Hungarian aspect is more dominant); Europe is sensitive to minorities statues (the strong position of Hungarian minorities); EU enlargement (the Hungary regional role in stabilizing);		

The elections document of MSZP placed Hungary and the Hungarian interests on the European playfield, outlined that it wants to create politics along the priority of the Hungarian interests. The document however did not place neither Europe in the world, nor Hungary in the European Union: the pledges are for the Hungarian citizens, not for the European citizens. The pledges only partly follow the statements laid down in the manifesto¹⁵ of the European Socialist Party in 2009, typically the questions concerning the European public policy are carried out from the national aspect.

MDF – List Leaders, Review without Alternatives

The program¹⁶ of MDF is a drafted program-booklet that is built up – choosing a quite puritan form - in a question-answer format introducing the most important European topics of MDF (and first of all its list leaders), the importance of the elections and some technical questions. The new element of the booklet is that it focuses on the current crises and on determined politicians. The crises as an economical-socializing fact became a program-building element, MDF became the only party that can find the way out of it with its competence and its program. Other elements of the booklet are Lajos Bokros and György Habsburg¹⁷, who as authentic professionals support

¹⁵ Source: http://elections2009.pes.org/files/u1/ManifestoBook_EN_Online.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

¹⁶ Why YES to the list of MDF on 7th June? Source: <http://eu.mdf.hu/index.php?mid=70&parent=39> (15. 7. 2009).

¹⁷ Lajos Bokros and György Habsburg are MDF's two EP list leaders. Lajos Bokros was the minister of finance of the socialist party between 1995 and 1996 (his appearance on the list of the conservative MDF was a surprise in this sense and caused a further split in the party). The so-called Bokros-package can be associated with him which was the heavily debated economic-financial stabilizing package of the mid 90's. György Habsburg is Otto Habsburgs son.

the program of the party. Special topics can be bound to them: Lajos Bokros wanted to play an active role on solving the crises, supported the redesign of the Common Agricultural Policy, the reform of the European budget, the enlargement, Common Energy- and Environmental Policy. György Habsburg is the person wanting to act for the sake of all the Hungarians using his connections. His special topics were the Hungarian presidency of the EU, effective crime hunting and crime prevention in the EU. Both candidates found the question of the enlargement important, especially as Croatia. The drafted parts of the programs, the personal topics did not form a whole program, and did not determine the program of MDF, they remained topics/proposals of the list leaders. The other specialty of the program booklet is that it placed domestic policy in the centre. MDF did not get out of the old frameworks¹⁸, it made itself a centre in the political sphere, and criticized its competitors, but its criticism remained within the frames of domestic policy. Some exceptions in the booklet: *“...the fame and international recognition of Hungary have been by the failed governmental policy of the recent seven years, headed by the bad answers given to the economic crises. Every Hungarian person shares the interest to re-establish the authority and fame of the country by well known professionals.”* By formulating the message of the party for the European elections MDF took domestic conflicts as a basis, since it wants to demonstrate the taxpayers being fed up with lying, selfish tension funding, restricting without reforms and populist clichés. Moreover is the division of the election groups typical. MDF addresses citizens holding foreign currency loans, entrepreneurs, pensioners, students, farmers and those believing in market. Its message has only few European contents: MDF tries to get closer to election groups through the criticism of other parties, but without having proposals instead. In summary the program booklet of MDF is a technical preparation with the crises, the two list leaders and the criticism of the Hungarian parties in its centre. The booklet does not follow the policy made by European People’s Party, the topics are loaded with a strong hint of domestic policy.

Outside of the Hungarian Parliament – Jobbik, Munkáspárt, LMP-HP, MCF

Four parties outside of the Hungarian Parliament have made a European Elections list, the right (Jobbik) and left (Munkáspárt) radical wings demonstrate a eurosceptical line in contrary to the above mentioned ones. The Jobbik and the Munkáspárt¹⁹ redefined Hungary’s place in the European dimension, as they did the same with the

¹⁸ For ages, the MDF made itself a centre in the political sphere for between the MSZP and the Fidesz.

¹⁹ The Munkáspárt actually didn’t have a specific European manifest, it simply summarized its political theses for the EP-elections.

European dimension itself. In the program of Jobbik²⁰ (which is a united, written, coherent program) EU is a money-eating, bureaucratic, evil empire, which national interests, while in the program of the Munkáspárt²¹ (rather a manifesto) EU – along with the global capital – is against the small citizens. Munkáspárt which takes disappointment from the capitalism as a basis, is bound to the *European United Left* (EUL) by its political orientation, the EUL is also quite divided. In the manifestos of the EUL²² and the Munkáspárt only the left wing orientation and the denial of the European structure is in common. The ideas of Jobbik are similar to those of the *British National Party*, at a European level to those of the *Union for the Nations of Europe*. As for Jobbik and Munkáspárt the radical ideology overwrites the public side, the programs are far from the EP: Munkáspárt outlines the new opening of the Hungarian coal mines, the “payroll moratorium” made by the government in case of private companies, workplaces and flats for the young, Jobbik outlines a new constitution based on the Saint Crown, the energy trade with international renegade states and the Kazakh brothers, and the defence of the Hungarian land. Jobbik provides an alternative opposite the current institution system of the EU: it states it is not EU, but European cooperation that has no alternative and this alternative can be summarized in the circle of nations of Europe. The circle of the nations of Europe does not mean the restriction of sovereignty, there’s no democratic deficit and the European Social Model is working. The program of Jobbik – just like that of Fidesz – is more than a European program, it is the first professional introduction of the party for the citizens. That is why the program contains so few relations to European politics, European policies are mentioned only for reasons of the criticism of the system, and proposals for the solution did not show in the program.

Table 5: The policy and European politics elements of Jobbi

The policy and European politics elements of Jobbik	
Alternatives to the current system of the EU; Economic policy; Agriculture; Environment;	Food safety; Energy; Employment Law;

In contrary LMP²³ and MCF do not target the destruction of the current frames, but the use of the opportunities given by the EU in their programs. The features of LMP

²⁰ Source: <http://www.jobbik.hu/sites/jobbik.hu/download/Jobbik-program2009EP.pdf> (15. 7. 2009).

²¹ Source: <http://www.munkaspart.hu> (15. 7. 2009).

²² Source: http://www.european-left.org/fileadmin/downloads/Electoral_Platform/Platform_en.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

²³ Source: <http://lehetmas.hu/img/lmp+ep+program.pdf> (15. 7. 2009).

reflect in every sense those of *European Greens (A Green New Deal for Europe*²⁴). MCF is a special case, since there is no fraction in the EU organized on an ethnical basis, so their leaders would have formed coalitions with the Hungarian minority parties. MCF does not have a united program, its thoughts are based on the feeling of being threatened and the solidarity of the roma. In their pronouncement made within the media there are only general things mentioned as the anti-discrimination measures, more effectiveness in the aid system. As for the platforms outside the parliament both from the political and the visual view is the program of the LMP the most powerful, this is the only program that contains concrete plans, concepts, arrangement plans. The program outlines five fields: global finances, nation policy, agricultural reforms, food and consumer insurance, climate change and energy. The proposals of the party are integrated in these fields. This party emphasized that only proposals are placed that really belong to the competence of the EU, so the review of the Basel II. financial system, the introduction of the Tobin-tax in the field of finances, supporting the cultural autonomy regarding minorities, rearranging the Common Agricultural Policy forcing bio production on small and medium sized environ-friendly farms, or the selection of the genetic manipulated seed corn.

Table 6: The policy and European Politics proposals of the LM

The policy and European Politics proposals of the LMP (by topics)	
Global finance The financial re-regulation in the EU and globally;	Food safety and consumer protection Environment and climate friendly production; Secure, high-quality food; Controlled food-trade; Consumer protection;
Nation policy Autonomy in the EU; Neighbourhood policy;	Climate protection and energy Climate act; Energy efficiency, energy saving; Renewable energy sources;
Rural Development Common Agricultural Policy; The restructuring of agricultural-support system; Environmental protection policy; The accessible countryside;	Green jobs; EU-taxes on transport; The representation of the special Hungarian interest in the EU

Summary – Evaluation of the European Programs

The programs made for the European Elections by Hungarian parties show a really varied picture. A real elections program was only performed by Fidesz, Jobbik and LMP-HP, their programs are special in the sense that they function not

²⁴ Source: http://europeangreens.eu/fileadmin/logos/pdf/manifesto_EUROPEAN_GREENS.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

only as a European program, Fidesz wanted to demonstrate its ability for governing, the two young parties had the first opportunity to introduce their conceptions. SZDSZ, MSZP and MDF – to less extent also the MDF – made program booklets, manifestos, which cannot be seen as a comprehensive program. For SZDSZ the dimension of the European profession policies, for MDF the domestic political aspect was dominated, MSZP laid itself between the two categories. The majority of the programs used just a few European topics: real European program was made only by Fidesz, SZDSZ (in a form of theses), and LMP-HP, to a less extent by the MSZP. Fidesz, LMP-HP, SZDSZ reflect the most on the documents of the European party families. The most important political and European topics (as a common minimum) in the programs are: Energy Policy, Environmental Policy, minority policy (a common European Minority Policy to be awaited), agriculture, rural development and the enlargement of the EU.

Table 7: The classification of the Hungarian EP programme

European dimension/contact with the European political groups	Real programs		Program-booklet, thesis, manifests			Hungarian dimensions
The European aspect is dominant and real content with the European political groups	Fidesz		SZDSZ			The Hungarian aspect is dominant
	LMP-HP		MSZP	MSZP	MDF	
	Jobbik	Jobbik	Munkáspárt		MCF	

European Lists and Campaigns

Preparations

The Hungarian parties began with the preparations and connection making for the elections already in 2008. During the preparation period Fidesz and MSZP gained foreign experiences. In February 2009 the members of MSZP Electorate together with the presidents of the counties took part on a preparation course in Brussels, where Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the European Socialist Party called the crises handling of the Hungarian government exemplary, and made clear he supports the government and Ferenc Gyurcsány Prime Minister²⁵. Viktor Orbán, President of Fidesz also started his tour in February 2009: he visited Vienna and Berlin, in the German capital he met leading politicians of CDU-CSU fraction and Chancellor Angela Merkel, with whom he discussed the answers of the Eastern

²⁵ He was the former Prime Minister, he resigned in March 2009.

European countries to be given to the economic crises. The smaller parties began to build out their foreign relations, too. The delegation of the Foreign Department of Jobbik met on 16th May 2008 the leader of the British Nationalist Party, Mark Griffin in London, they discussed the potential cooperation between the two of them and the questions of the European elections. LMP made connections to the European Green Party.

Compilation of the European Lists

The compilation of the EP lists²⁶ has already begun in 2008, and the parties took the opportunity to campaign. The Jobbik named its list leaders, Krisztina Morvai at first (even in September 2008), who had a big role in the campaign. The Fidesz made its EP list public in January 2009, the other parties only in February (MSZP, SZDSZ), respectively in March (LMP-HP, MDF). In the compilation of the list the parties were independent; they did not follow any line from abroad. In the compilation of the list the only pressure was European reality (the fact that Hungary now has 22 MEPs in the European Parliament) and the internal politics reality (the positions of lists leaders are formed in the parties' battle). The strategic compilation of the EP lists was typical, since the conservative MDF made Lajos Bokros to list leader²⁷, a former socialist Minister of Finance in the 1990s. The EP list can be characterized by medium *fluctuation*²⁸ compares the lists in 2004. It is true by itself that the fluctuation was high according to the candidates, but it is not correct to the elected MEPs. From the 24 elected Hungarian MEPs in 2004 12 came back again to the EP (9 Fidesz and 3 MSZP MEPs), so there are 10 new Hungarian MEPs (5 Fidesz, 1 MSZP, 1 MDF and 3 Jobbik MEPs). If we analyse the lists, we can recognize that the MDF's list suffered the biggest fluctuation²⁹ (it means 20 new candidates); the fluctuation is medium by the MSZP (13 new candidates) and the SZDSZ (12 new candidates); and the fluctuation is low by the Fidesz (9 new candidates).³⁰ But the fluctuation at the number of elected candidates is the biggest exactly at the Fidesz's case: since from the 9 new Fidesz's candidates 5 have been elected (while at the MSZP's and MDF's case only 1 new

²⁶ It is a tendency that every election year the parties nominate more people than the maximum number of mandates that can be won. In the following calculations I always started out for each year (2004, 2009) from the list complied of the maximum number of EP mandates (24 in 2004, 22 in 2009).

²⁷ The sudden change of direction had its effects: though the decision of the leader of the party, Ibolya Dávid turned out to be correct since the head of the list got in to the EP, nevertheless after the elections the conservative parties dissolution continued (expulsions and stepping out of the party).

²⁸ According to the fluctuation it is very important that Hungary had 24 MEP mandate in 2004, and it has only 22 in 2009.

²⁹ It is important to mention in all cases that the real picture of the fluctuation is distorted by the fact that in 2004 there were 24, while in 2009 there were 22 mandates to be taken into account.

³⁰ Naturally we do not examine the fluctuation of the newly formed Jobbik, LMP-HP. The Munkáspárt does not count as a considerable force.

candidate got seat in the EP). Latter can be explained by result of the elections (the Fidesz had biggest chance to get new MEP mandate), and the phenomenon that the parties took the new candidates fore-part of the lists.

Table 8: The fluctuation of the EP lists

The fluctuation of the EP lists ³¹								
The party/party alliance set up the list	Fidesz-KDNP	Fidesz	SZDSZ		MSZP		MDF	
Year	2009	2004	2009	2004	2009	2004	2009	2004
The whole number of the candidates	66	72	22	24	66	72	66	66
The maximum number of MEPs elected by the Hungarian citizens in this year	22	24	22	24	22	24	22	24
The number of MEPs, who were elected from this list	14	12	0	2	4	9	1	1
The number of new candidates on this list (compared to 2004) ³²	9		12		13		20	
The number of new candidates, who were elected in 2009 (new elected candidates) ³³	5		0		1		1	

Continuous Campaign and Identity

The Fidesz's, the LMP-HP's campaign were connected with not only European, but other aspects as well. The intensified domestic battle since 2006 resulted a slightly strange campaign situation: it is said that Fidesz has been campaign for 3 years. The Fidesz's »continuing campaign« turned into a campaign to getting the government position (to demonstrate its ability for governing): since the spring of 2009 the party issued a number of important documents, proving the ability of making resolutions of economic and financial crisis. From the Fidesz's view the campaign was is not a special EP campaign, but a continuous campaign preparing for the governance. For the small parties (Jobbik and LMP-HP) the campaign was an identity-campaign: it was the first occasion to promoting their programmes. This specific situation (preparing for governance, identity promoting) explained

³¹ In the analysis I started out from those parties which received an EP-mandate in 2004, as a result Jobbik which at that time didn't even stand a list is not represented.

³² The numbers of new candidates are compared to the maximum number of Hungarian MEPs.

³³ I compared the number of new representatives to the maximum number of mandates which could be handed out in 2009 (22 mandates), thus I did not analyse the total list of the party (since only the maximum number of representatives in the given year has relevance).

that it was exactly the Fidesz and the LMP-HP who made real programmes, and most of these programs focused on the European (policy) issues.

Negative Campaign – Threatening with Extremist

The characteristic of the European campaigns in Hungary is the threatening with extremists. Both the MSZP (government party) and the SZDSZ (the former coalition partner with the MSZP) have proposed the message that it is very important to action against the extremists, indeed, this was extended to the largest opposition party, Fidesz was reported as working together with the extreme right-wing forces. The socialist party was trying to broadcast other messages (personal messages to the voters by using list leaders), but the SZDSZ's campaign was based on only the threatening with extremist. The political tactic of the MSZP and the SZDSZ – as the results will be shown – was proved to be wrongly.

Separation European Programmes: The Dominance of Domestic Issues

The European campaign launched relatively late, at the beginning of May 2009. There were formerly rural campaign events, but from May the billboards appeared on the streets and started a series of electoral events. The campaign's main themes were primarily domestic politics: mainly the Fidesz (which preparing the government role) expressed – with its “Enough” slogan – that the socialists' government should have to go. The campaigns were generally characterized by the lack of European content, the key themes were the economic crisis, the government's failure and incompetence, the roma-issue, the relationship of the extremists. Even if the programs (Fidesz, LMP-HP, SZDSZ, MSZP) carried European or policy content, the campaigns “success” were above it: the European essence of the campaigns missed. This was particularly surprising at the Fidesz's and the SZDSZ's case, since both parties (though in another form in a coherent program, as well as in a manifesto) put forward an important European content, however, failed integrating this European content to its campaigns. The MSZP communicated personalized (policy) messages by the list leaders, but was not able to come out from the domestic arena. The only exception is the LMP-HP's campaign based on policy elements; however this is a new party, so the identity making was very important in this case. The MDF's campaign based on the MDF's list leaders, as the party's program, the campaign had not plenty of European content. Overall, it was not develop a special European campaign-environment, which would have led the independence European campaign.³⁴

³⁴ In this context, it is also important that since 2006 a sharp change of the government mood has been dominating in the country, and Fidesz's has been appearing each elections occasion (mid-term elections, referendum) as a sentence on the government and the socialists.

Impact of Abroad

The aid from the European political groups was typical Hungarian EP-campaign. It has been said that the parties also used foreign assistance in the preparation, and this was not differently in the campaign. Immediately prior to the campaign came to Hungary Paul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the European Socialist Party, who had discussions with the Head of the Government (Gordon Bajnai), and the President of the MSZP and the MSZP's list leaders. Even in May 2009 Wilfried Martens (the President of the European People's Party) has established the Fidesz's campaign overture, who proposed solution to the crisis, that the Fidesz' program should be carried out. The example of the cooperation beyond borders is the jointly congress held in Slovakia by the Fidesz and the Slovak Hungarian Coalition (MKP), which has caused domestic and foreign politics storm. At the jointly congress Viktor Orbán (President of the Fidesz) said that the European Parliament Elections will show that how many MEPs will represent the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin. According to this statement the Slovak Parliament adopted a decision, which condemned the Orbán's speech. The Fidesz said that this decision was »tragicomic« and represent Slovak government's intentions getting votes at the EP Elections. European People's Party intervened in this debate: Wilfried Martens has issued a statement in which he welcomed the cross-border cooperation, and worried about the animosity by some parties and governments. To assisting the LMP-HP's campaign Daniel Cohn-Bendit (President of the parliament group European Greens) and Philippe Lamberts (spokespersons of the European Green Party) went to Hungary.

Surfaces, Campaign Techniques

The party traditionally used billboards and advertisements (television, radio, press). The utilization of the Internet (advertising panels, as well as the interactive pages, blogs) is average, however, almost all parties (according to the European samples) had EP Election website. The media surfaces were traditionally used by the parliamentary parties (MSZP, Fidesz, MDF, SZDSZ), and the Jobbik did the campaign by its own "media empire". A special event of the campaign was that in May 2009, a liberal political analyst institute³⁵ published an analysis³⁶ on the rank of the MEPs of the 2004-2009 period, it represented the activity of the MEPs. The analysis indicated that Hungarian left-wing and liberal MEPs were slightly more active, such as the right-wing MEPs. Immediately before the elections (2nd June 2009)

³⁵ Republikon Institute

³⁶ The „24” – The ranging list evaluation of the Hungarian MEPs according to their Source: http://intezet.republikon.hu/pdfs/32/Republikon_-_a_24ek.pdf (15. 7. 2009).

a right-wing institute³⁷ also published a ranking analysis³⁸ – not surprisingly – with better right-wing’s results. Another interesting point was the debate of the list leaders (5th June 2009), with a small media coverage.³⁹

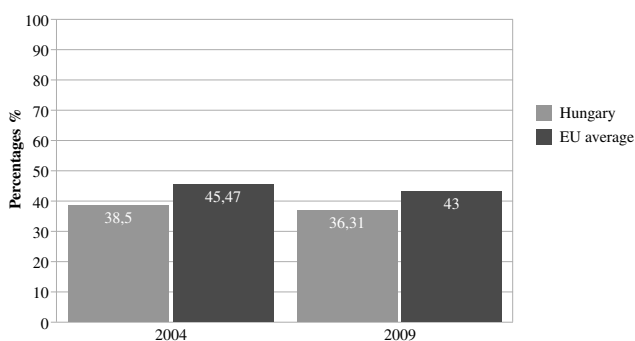
The Result of the European Elections

The results of the European Parliament Election were not unexpectedly: all public opinion researcher institutes had took into account the pushing forward of the right-wing. However the MSZP and the SZDSZ were confronted with the failed government politics by the final result of the elections. Two surprises have happened: the MDF (which was told to fail its European mandate) was able to turn, and the Jobbik got three seats in the EP.

The Formation of the Participation by Temporal Aspect

In Hungary at the 2009 European Parliament Elections 2 920 948 votes were given (from the 8 073 713 registered voters⁴⁰) and the number of the valid votes is 2 896 179. This means that the 36.31% of the registered voters voted. This participation falls short with 2% of the 2004 European Parliament Election in Hungary (when the 38.50% of registered persons voted⁴¹). The both Hungarian participation results fall short of the overall results European Elections, which was 45.47% in 2004 and 43% in 2009.

Figure 1: The turnout of the 2009 European Elections⁴²



³⁷ Perspective Institution

³⁸ The ranging list of the Hungarian MEPs; Source: http://www.nezopontintezet.hu/olvass_politikai.php?cid=120 (15. 7. 2009).

³⁹ The list leader of Fidesz and MCF did not go to the debate.

⁴⁰ 1 652 voters were not Hungarian EP citizen.

⁴¹ 8 015 366 Hungarian and 1 956 non Hungarian citizen were registered in 2004.

⁴² Source: TNS opinion in collaboration with the EP. Source: http://www.elections2009-results.eu/en/hungary_en.html (15. 7. 2009).

Both the European Elections details in 2004, as well in 2009 are below of the participation in Hungarian Parliamentary Elections. The participation rate of the last Parliamentary Elections (in 2006) is 67.83% in the first round and 64.36% in the second round (among the registered voters).

The Formation of the Participation by Electoral Districts⁴³

On the occasion of the 2009 European Parliament Elections the most people (traditionally) went vote in the environs of Budapest. Furthermore the participation rate was high in the western border area and the Northern-Hungary. In the latter region the Jobbik has pushed forward, which can be explained by the deterioration of the Hungarian public security and the high number of roma population (see Figure 4).

The Evaluation of the Results Compared with the Previous Elections

The best result of the 2009 European Elections in Hungary was reached by the largest opposition party, the Fidesz. Instead the former 12 MEPs the party can delegate 14 ones, the Fidesz got the 56.36% of votes (is means the first place in Europe). The MSZP as the government party (its former 9 MEPs position reduced 4) and the SZDSZ (the party dropped out from the EP) suffered the biggest defeat. The extremist Jobbik gained the biggest victory, because the party had similar result like the socialists (the Jobbik has 3 MEPs). The other big surprise was the MDF, because this party contrary to all expectations got European mandate (this result thanks to the list leader, Lajos Bokros). The LMP-HP configuration (the LMP was founded just in 2009) was able to reach a very good result at the first elections of this party. Overall, the small parties (MDF, LMP-HP and the Jobbik) with the exception of the SZDSZ have achieved good results, eves the 400 000 voters of Jobbik and weakness of the MSZP and the SZDSZ show the transformation of the Hungarian party system.

⁴³ The country territory is divided into electoral districts. Each electoral district has a polling station where the eligible voters living in the territory of the electoral district may cast their votes.

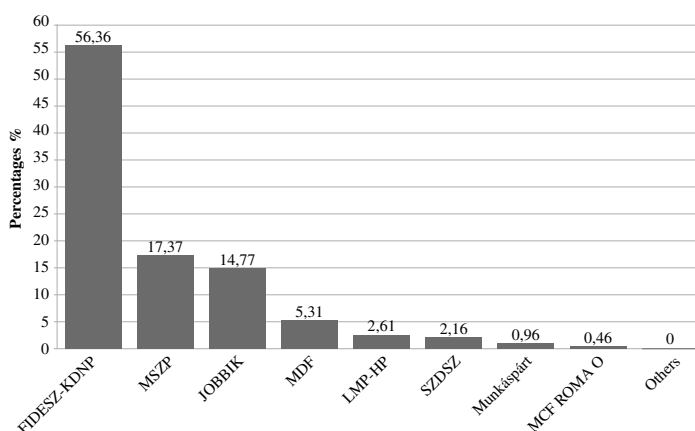
The results of the 2009 European Elections (Hungary) I.

Table 9: The results of the 2009 European Elections (Hungary) I.⁴⁴

The name of the party/ parties setting up a list	Number of list votes	Percentage of votes	Total number of seats	Percentage of seats
Fidesz-KDNP	1 632 309	56,36%	14	63,64%
MSZP	503 140	17,37%	4	18,18%
Jobbik	427 773	14,77%	3	13,64%
MDF	153 660	5,31%	1	4,55%
LMP-HP	75 522	2,61 %	0	
SZDSZ	62 527	2,16 %	0	
Munkáspárt	27 817	0,96 %	0	
MCF	13 431	0,46 %	0	
Total	2 896 179	100,00%	22	100,00%

The results of the 2009 European Elections (Hungary) II.

Figure 2: The results of the 2009 European Elections (Hungary) II.⁴⁵



⁴⁴ Source: http://www.valasztas.hu/en/ep2009/291/291_0_index.html (15. 7. 2009) and <http://www.visionconsulting.hu/cgi-bin/cikk.php?id=249> (15. 7. 2009).

⁴⁵ Source: TNS opinion in collaboration with the EP http://www.elections2009-results.eu/en/hungary_en.html (15. 7. 2009).

The 2009 European Elections strengthened the status of the Fidesz: the party has got more 174 559 votes in 2009 compared with 2004. The MSZP has lost 551 781 votes compared with the 2004 European Elections, and 1 833 565 votes compared with the Hungarian Parliamentary Elections in 2006 (the latter figure is not suitable for a real comparison, because the image is distorted by different participation rates, but it could be warning). The SZDSZ lost 175 381 votes compared with the last European Elections, so the party dropped out from the EP. The support of the MDF (compared with 2004 European Elections) have not substantially changed (the decrease of 10 365 votes), thus the party has maintained the representation in the EP. It is very interesting that the Jobbik was able to fill the position of the weak MIÉP (the former extreme right party), and has multiplied votes of the extreme right.

The results of the 2004 European Elections (Hungary)

Table 10: The results of the 2004 European Elections (Hungary)⁴⁶

The name of the party/parties setting up a list	Number of list votes	Percentage of votes	Total number of seats	Percentage of seats
Fidesz	1 457 750	47,40 %	12	50%
MSZP	1 054 921	34,30 %	9	37,50%
SZDSZ	237 908	7,74 %	2	8,33%
MDF	164 025	5,33 %	1	4,17%
MIÉP ⁴⁷	72 203	2,35 %	0	
Munkáspárt	56 221	1,83 %	0	
Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség	20 226	0,66 %	0	
Szociáldemokrata Párt	12 196	0,40 %	0	
Total	2 896 179	100,00%	24	100,00%

⁴⁶ Source: http://www.valasztas.hu/ep2004/04/en/10/10_0.html (15. 7. 2009) and <http://www.visionconsulting.hu/cgi-bin/cikk.php?id=249> (15. 7. 2009).

⁴⁷ The MIÉP was the former extreme right party, which set up a list with the Jobbik at 2006 Hungarian Parliamentary Elections. Nowadays the MIÉP has disintegrated and the Jobbik fulfil the MIÉP's position.

The results of the 2006 Hungarian Parliament Elections⁴⁸

Table 11: The results of the 2006 Hungarian Parliament Election

The name of the party/parties setting up a list	Number of list votes	Percentage of list votes	SMC ⁴⁹ seat	Territorial list seat	National list seats	Total number of seats	Percentage of seats
MSZP	2 336 705	43,21	102	71	17	190	49,22
Fidesz-KDNP	2 272 979	42,03	68	69	27	164	42,49
SZDSZ	351 612	6,5	5	4	11	20	5,18
MDF	272 831	5,04	0	2	9	11	2,85
MIÉP-Jobbik	119 007	2,2					
Munkáspárt	21 955	0,41					

Changes of support of the Hungarian parties at the European Elections

Table 12: Changes of support of the Hungarian parties at the European Election

The name of the party/parties setting up a list	The change of the number of list votes by 2009	The change of the total number of seats by 2009	The change of the percentage of seats by 2009
Fidesz	+174 599	+ 3	+10,64%
MSZP	-551 781	-5	-19,32%
SZDSZ	-175 381	-2	-8,33%
MDF	-10 365	0	+0,38%
Jobbik		+3	+13,64

The Hungarian MEPs in the European Party Families

The Hungarian MEPs joined to EP fractions according to their political party. The socialist MEPs joined to the new *Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats*, while the Fidesz's MEPs to the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). The MDF's MEP, Lajos Bokros did not participate in the Group of the European People's Party (the former MDF's MEP worked in this fraction), instead he joined to the *European Conservatives and Reformists Group*. There was no trouble about the extreme rights and eurosceptical forces' discussions

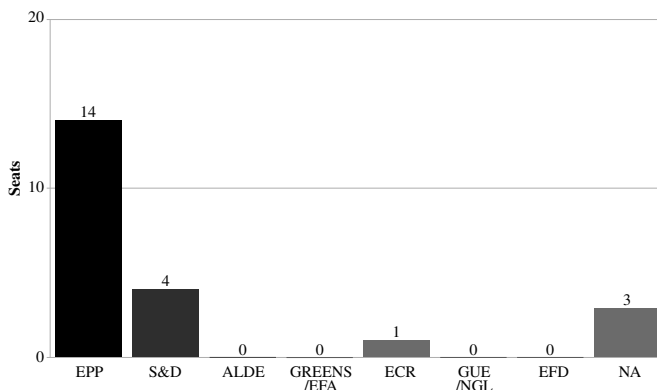
⁴⁸ Source: http://www.valasztas.hu/en/ep2009/291/291_0_index.html (15. 7. 2009) and <http://www.visionconsulting.hu/valasztas/valasztas-parl.htm> (15. 7. 2009).

⁴⁹ SMC: Single Member Constituency

forming EP fraction, therefore the Jobbik's 3 MEPs have started to work in the EP as independent MEPs.

Hungarian MEPs in 2009

Figure 3: Hungarian MEPs in 2009⁵⁰



EPP : Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)

S&D : Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

ALDE : Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

GREENS/ EFA : Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance

ECR : European Conservatives and Reformists Group

GUE/ NGL : Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left

EFD : Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group

NA : Non-attached

The European Elections and the Party System

From the results of the 2009 European Election we cannot reach far-reaching conclusions, since the participation of this election was not comparable with the turnout of the Parliamentary Elections in Hungary. However, we can say that the Hungarian party system is in transition. The former ("frozen") two-party structure (the status of the MSZP and the Fidesz) and the structure of the small parties (MDF, SZDSZ) have come to an end. This was caused by on the one hand the weakness of the socialists

⁵⁰ Source: TNS opinion in collaboration with the EP http://www.elections2009results.eu/en/hungary_en.html (15. 7. 2009).

and the SZDSZ, and on the other hand the strengthening of the Fidesz. The MSZP and the liberal party have largely abraded during the last 7 years, and they have again a weak European representation (after 2004) in the EP. The MSZP has almost become a medium party, however the national elections may change this situation. The European Elections have provisionally eased the tensions (exclusions, the fragmentation of the party between the socialists and the Fidesz) in the MDF, but the status of President of the party (who took the successful initiative nominating Lajos Bokros) is far from stable. The elections were the final steps in the disintegration of the SZDSZ, now the party can be characterized by internal struggles and finding new deal. The winners are the Fidesz, but rather as the Jobbik and the LMP-HP. The good result of forces outside the Hungarian Parliament gives signals about the needs of the voters to change, and the rearrangement of the Hungarian party system. The success of the two small parties reflects the most important problems of Hungarian society: the disillusionment of the Hungarian transition's elite; the problems of the coexistence with roma society; the relationship to global capital. These problems are very actually by pushing forward of the extreme right-wing Jobbik. The problem about the extreme right is not just the MSZP's case, because the Fidesz has to answer to that challenge which Jobbik means. Therefore we have to take the Jobbik into consideration as a potential party of the Hungarian Parliament. This case raises the revaluation of the earlier cleavages⁵¹ (economic and cultural left-right) in Hungarian party system. The moderate-radical (or extreme) cleavage and the redefinition of the meaning of leftist and rightist attitude will be the main points of the next decades.

Table 13: The consequences of the 2009 European Elections in Hungary

Consequence, phenomenon	Appearances in the party system
The "frozen" two-party structure has changed	The weakening of the MSZP and the SZDSZ; the strengthening of the Jobbik and the LMP-HP
The disintegration of parties	The agony of the SZDSZ
Disillusionment of the earlier structures; the need of new parties (which are sensitive to the real problems of the society)	The strengthening of the Fidesz, the Jobbik and the LMP-HP
Decomposition of the basis of the parties; the transformation of voter preferences	The Jobbik got MSZP's and Fidesz's voters
The strengthening of the extreme right	The revaluation of the earlier cleavages (economic and cultural left-right) in Hungarian party system; the strengthening of the moderate-radical (or extreme) cleavage
Searching new party-identity	The redefinition of the traditional meaning of leftist and rightist attitude

⁵¹ (Bartolini 2000); (Marks – Wilson 2000); (Bayer – Jensen 2007)

Insert I: Exhibit on Computing Seats (d'Hondt Matrix) at the EP Elections in Hungary⁵²

Drawn sequence number	1	5	6	8
List	FIDESZ-KDNP	MSZP	JOBBIK	MDF
Seats won	14	4	3	1
Vote / 1	1 632 309,00	503 140,00	427 773,00	153 660,00
Vote / 2	816 154,50	251 570,00	213 886,50	76 830,00
Vote / 3	544 103,00	167 713,33	142 591,00	51 220,00
Vote / 4	408 077,25	125 785,00	106 943,25	38 415,00
Vote / 5	326 461,80	100 628,00	85 554,60	30 732,00
Vote / 6	272 051,50	83 856,67	71 295,50	25 610,00
Vote / 7	233 187,00	71 877,14	61 110,43	21 951,43
Vote / 8	204 038,63	62 892,50	53 471,63	19 207,50
Vote / 9	181 367,67	55 904,44	47 530,33	17 073,33
Vote / 10	163 230,90	50 314,00	42 777,30	15 366,00
Vote / 11	148 391,73	45 740,00	38 888,45	13 969,09
Vote / 12	136 025,75	41 928,33	35 647,75	12 805,00
Vote / 13	125 562,23	38 703,08	32 905,62	11 820,00
Vote / 14	116 593,50	35 938,57	30 555,21	10 975,71
Vote / 15	108 820,60	33 542,67	28 518,20	10 244,00
Vote / 16	102 019,31	31 446,25	26 735,81	9 603,75
Vote / 17	96 018,18	29 596,47	25 163,12	9 038,82
Vote / 18	90 683,83	27 952,22	23 765,17	8 536,67
Vote / 19	85 911,00	26 481,05	22 514,37	8 087,37
Vote / 20	81 615,45	25 157,00	21 388,65	7 683,00
Vote / 21	77 729,00	23 959,05	20 370,14	7 317,14
Vote / 22	74 195,86	22 870,00	19 444,23	6 984,55

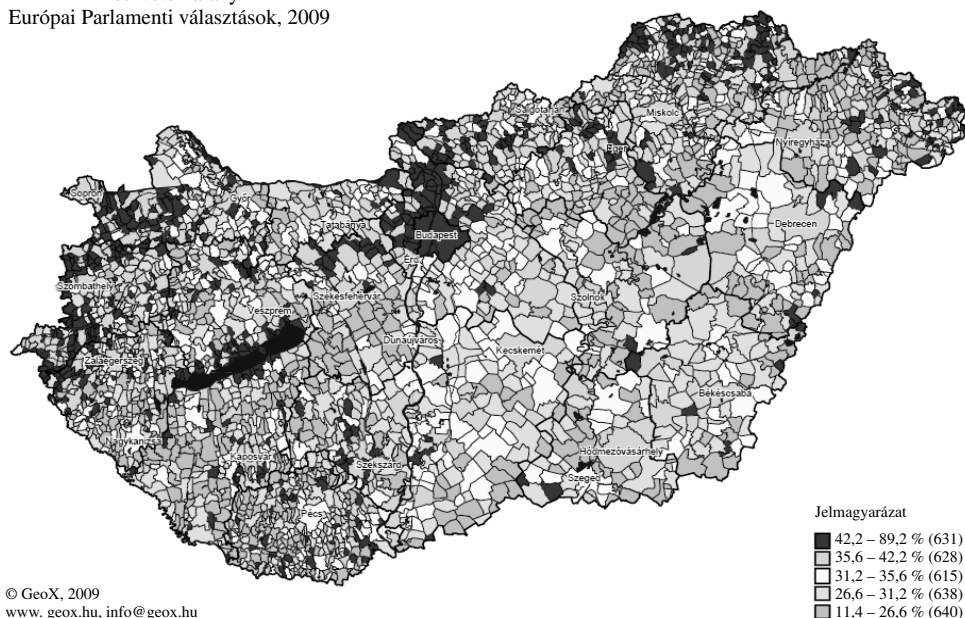
⁵² Source: http://www.valasztas.hu/en/ep2009/291/291_0_index.html (15. 7. 2009)

Table 14: Comparing the programs of the parties set up election lists on the 2009 European Election

	Fidesz-KDNP	SZDSZ	MSZP	MDF	Munkáspárt	Jobbik	LMP-HP	MCF
Nature of the program (written program, thesis booklet, no program)	Written program	Thesis booklet (manifesto)	European pledges	Program booklet	General, not European manifesto	Written program	Written program	No written program, declarations
Attendance of the EU and EP in the programs of the parties	Regular attendance, European policy as one of the leading principles (with returning criticism of the government)	Concerns on the questions of the European professional politics	European questions within domestic frames	European questions only oscular topics, the personality and topics of the list leaders dominate	Euro-sceptical attitude, exploitation of the small citizens	Euro-sceptical attitude, alternative for the current EU construction (nation's Europe)	Coherent view and proposal system	EU appears only as an element of a special political question
Practically integration of the EU to the domestic parts of the program	Accepting the verdicts of the European decision making and the European party, these cannot be overwritten by the national interests	National topics (controls of the employees, minority topics) in European frames	EU is integrated in the program only as the representative of the Hungarian interests	European topics are negotiated in a domestic context, professional policies are not detailed	EU-criticism, questions of European professional policies are not given	Critical handling of the European professional policies, within domestic frames	Integrity of European questions to the domestic topics, European perspective remains	Without a written program, the integrity of the EU is not real
Reference to the European party families	Following the program of the EPP, with Hungarian curiosity	Following ELDR's manifesto	Indirect connection to the proposals of the European Socialist Party	Only a few political proposals taken from the EPP	Really weak relationship to the proposals made by the EUL	Similarities to the proposals of the Union for the European Nations, on the national level with the British National Party	Strong relationship to the European Greens	No party family

Figure 4: Participation in 2009 European Elections (Hungary)

Részvételi arány
Európai Parlamenti választások, 2009



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Source: http://www.geox.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=147&Itemid=1
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The programmes, thesis of the Hungarian parties

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EL (European Left) –

http://www.european-left.org/fileadmin/downloads/Electoral_Platform/Platform_en.pdf (15. 7. 2009)

ELDR (European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party) –

<http://www.eldr.org/pdf/manifeste/eldr-manifeste-electoral-en.pdf> (15.7.2009)

EPP (European People's Party) –

http://www.epp.eu/dbimages/pdf/EN-ELECTION-DOC-FINAL_copy_2.pdf (15. 7. 2009)

EPP (European People's Party) –

http://www.epp.eu/dbimages/pdf/EN-ELECTION-DOC-FINAL_copy_2.pdf (15. 7. 2009)

Fidesz-KDNP –

http://fidesz.hu/download/program2009_magyar.pdf (15. 7. 2009)

Jobbik –

<http://www.jobbik.hu/sites/jobbik.hu/down/Jobbik-program2009EP.pdf>
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LMP-HP –

<http://lehetmas.hu/img/lmp+ep+program.pdf> (15. 7. 2009)

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